

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Office Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 15, 16 and 19-36 are pending in this application, with Claims 15, 19, 23 and 30 being independent. Claims 14 and 18 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 15, 16 and 19-23 and 30 are amended herein. Applicants submit that no new matter has been added.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that Claims 15 and 19 contain allowable subject matter.

Claims 14, 18, 20, 21, 23-26, 30-33 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,447,979 (Hattori et al.). Claims 16, 27 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly unpatentable over Hattori et al. Claims 16 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly unpatentable over Hattori et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,254,525 (Nakajima et al.). Claims 29 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly unpatentable over Hattori et al. in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001-0031342 (Engle et al.). These rejections are respectfully traversed. Nevertheless, in order to expedite prosecution, Applicants have cancelled Claims 14 and 18, rewritten Claims 15 and 19 in independent form, amended Claims 16, 20 and 21 to depend from Claim 15, and amended Claim 22 to depend from Claim 19. Applicants submit that these claims are allowable.

Additionally, Applicants have amended independent Claims 23 and 30 to recite the feature recited in allowable Claims 15 and 19. Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claims

23-36 are also allowable because Hattori et al. does not teach or suggest at least a barrier layer having an air permeability value.

Nakajima et al. was cited for teaching a cushion layer made of epoxy having a thickness between 1 and 50 microns. Engle et al. was cited for teaching an information recording medium in the form of a roll. Neither Nakajima et al. nor Engle et al. remedy the above-noted deficiency of Hattori et al.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and withdrawal of the §§ 102 and 103 rejections are requested.

Applicants submit that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claims 15, 19, 23 and 30. Dependent Claims 16, 20-22, 24-29 and 31-36 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the invention in addition to the features recited in the independent claims. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Applicants submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. L. Klock", written over a horizontal line.

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